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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1462
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3513
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2899
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: JOURNALISTS IN KYRGYZSTAN: DETAILS OF RECENT
ATTACKS

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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Since March, several local journalists have been physically attacked. This cable outlines available information about these recent attacks. At least two cases may be linked to the journalists' reporting. Local media and authorities are actively covering the case of Almaz Tashiyev, who died following an assault by one or more policemen in southern Kyrgyzstan. Embassy has raised the issue of attacks on journalists with Kyrgyz authorities, but cautions that not all attacks can be linked to the journalists' work. End Summary.

Syrgak Abdyldayev

[1](#)2. (U) On March 3, unknown assailants attacked Syrgak Abdyldayev, a reporter for the "Reporter-Bishkek" newspaper, outside his Bishkek office. Abdyldayev suffered numerous stab wounds and broken bones, and was subsequently hospitalized for several weeks. His writing covered a wide range of political and criminal issues, with varying degrees of accuracy. Although the culprits have not been caught, there is speculation that his attack was related to his reporting.

Bahadir Kenjebayev

[1](#)3. (U) On March 7, several individuals severely beat up Bahadir Kenjebayev, a cameraman for Osh TV. Kyrgyz authorities captured a suspect, who they indicated had attempted to mug Kenjebayev.

Yelena Agheyeva and Ulugbek Babakulov

[1](#)4. (U) On March 26, at around midnight, Yelena Agheyeva and Ulugbek Babakulov, two journalists for the local edition of

"Moskovskiy Komsomolets" were assaulted near Agheyeva's residence in Bishkek. The attackers took money and cell phones from their victims. Agheyeva told investigators that the attack was not related to her professional work, and blamed a ring of criminals who were later apprehended.

Yrysbek Omurzakov

15. (SBU) On May 7, two policemen assaulted Yrysbek Omurzakov, editor-in-chief of the "Tribuna" newspaper, in what has been described as an incident of road rage in Bishkek. While initial speculation pinned the attack on his investigative work, Omurzakov later told the Embassy he did not believe the attack was related to his writing. One of the policemen involved has been reportedly fired for his conduct.

Abduvahab Moniev

16. (U) On June 6, assailants attacked Abduvahab Moniev, a journalist for "Achik Sayosat," in Bishkek. The motive for the attack is unclear; however, Moniev was known for his critical writing. Police have not identified any suspects in his attack.

Almaz Tashiyev

17. (SBU) On July 4, one or more police officers assaulted Almaz Tashiyev, a freelance journalist, in Nookat, which is southwest of Osh. While the exact location of the assault is not clear (some reports indicate it took place while Tashiyev

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was at a police station), Tashiyev later was admitted to hospital and died July 12, apparently from injuries sustained in the beating. Although western media reported that Tashiyev was a "government critic," a local journalist told Embassy that Tashiyev "was not critical of the government, and wrote mostly on social issues." Authorities have launched an investigation, and one policeman has reportedly admitted to his role in the beating.

Comment

18. (SBU) All of these incidents are troubling, and some may have links to the journalistic activities of their victims -- however, we must be careful not to state that all of these attacks are related to their work. The Embassy will continue to encourage Kyrgyz authorities to investigate and prosecute these cases, as well as protect the rights of Kyrgyz journalists to work without fear and intimidation.
LITZENBERGER